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CIA is accused Paisley cover

WASHINGTON — Under orders from director Stansfield Turner, the CIA is trying to cover up the vital role John A. Paisley played in the agency and the nation's intelligence community, according to sources at the highest level of the CIA.

One of the top officials at the Central Intelligence Agency who received the oral coverup order, said Turner told agency officials not to cooperate with the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Among information vital to the Senate investigation that the agency did not disclose is that the CIA had a set of Paisley's fingerprints in its files since 1970 and that Paisley had direct access to Turner in the months before Paisley either disappeared or died.

A decomposed body identified as Paisley's was fished from the Chesapeake Bay in October. The CIA prints would have helped identify that body. Instead the FBI used prints that it said were mailed into its Phoenix office in 1940 by a "Jack Paisley."

Paisley's role in the agency was constantly downplayed by CIA spokesmen and officials until News-Journal articles disclosed he was involved at the highest levels of intelligence, particularly as it related to the satellite spy system.

After those News-Journal articles, Turner ordered several of his top officials, including those in public affairs, to take lie detector tests to see if they had been leaking information.

The Turner coverup order was apparently aimed at concealing the following information about Paisley which would be vital to the Senate probe, according to sources in the CIA and close to the committee:

- Fingerprints were taken of Paisley before he left to go on a trip to England in 1970. The FBI has insisted it searched government files and found no prints later than 1940. The CIA has never volunteered its own prints.

- Four years after he allegedly retired as deputy director of strategic research, Paisley still held a pass to enter the CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., any time he desired.

- Paisley had direct access to Turner and the two men conferred on the KH-11 spy satellite system and U.S. tracking of Soviet and Chinese military operations.

- Paisley helped write the manual the KH-11 and instructed its operators which sites in Israel, China and the Soviet Union should be kept under surveillance.

- Until his death or disappearance, Paisley had a top-secret "libretto" or list of code words that gave him access almost every facet of CIA secret information.

- So many of the documents Paisley signed out from CIA headquarters could not be located that the CIA chose to say he had no secret documents.

At the time of his disappearance, one of Paisley's roles was to evaluate the report of a team of outside experts advising the CIA on Soviet military capabilities. A draft of that report was found on Paisley's sloop, the Brillig, when it ran aground without him in the Chesapeake Bay on Sept. 24.

The CIA last week cut off all comment on the Paisley case, referring inquiries to the Justice Department, which has taken over the Intelligence Committee probe. In accordance with that, the CIA refused Friday to comment on Turner's orders or any other aspects of this story.

The Justice Department has agreed to let the FBI investigate the case because that agency has jurisdiction over counterespionage. Capitol Hill sources said they could not recall any other time when the FBI was, in effect, investigating the CIA.

"From the start they (the CIA) have not cooperated. They have lied, misled and refused us what we wanted," said one angry member of the Senate committee.

The failure of the CIA to cooperate was also cited by a spokesman for the committee yesterday when he was asked if the intelligence agency had volunteered the information before News-Journal articles disclosed new elements in the Paisley probe.

"We had first thought we were getting cooperation," the spokesman said. "As your articles kept appearing it became clear we were getting the runaround. It was an inability to verify what they were telling us that caused us to go

special assistant on counterintelligence.

After Paisley's sloop was found, and the body identified, the CIA insisted he was a low-level analyst who had retired in 1974. Paisley, in fact, was one of the top 100 people in the agency. Despite Turner's orders, information about Paisley has continued to surface since his disappearance.

The body identified as Paisley had a single gunshot wound above the left ear and had two scuba diving weights strapped around it. With the help of the 1940 FBI prints, the Maryland state medical examiner identified the body as Paisley. Maryland police said he probably committed suicide but continued their investigation.

The identification came under suspicion when the FBI said it could find no prints later than 1940. It also said a large number of prints that could have included Paisley's had been destroyed some years ago.

The medical examiner also used a dentist's identification of an upper plate. The dentist later said the plate could have belonged to a million people and that he had no dental charts to compare it with.

Sources close to the CIA and intelligence committee said that Turner's assistant, Williams, became so incensed at News-Journal revelations that he twice ordered persons suspected of leaking information to be questioned by the CIA Office of Security. At least three "suspects" were given lie detector tests.

The agency also gave special briefings to other reporters in an effort to discredit stories that the intelligence committee later found to be correct. CIA officials eventually conceded that Paisley was a